



THE BANK OF COMMERCE

MORE THAN A BANK

The Bank of Commerce is a genuine American success story. While many think of a bank as a necessary evil, the real story is quite different. The Bank of Commerce is a case in point.

A skilled and responsible banker is critical to the economic vitality of any community. Although not highly visible, a valued banker is one who understands and supports the financial requirements of farmers and ranchers, of real estate agents and homeowners, and of local businesses and professionals. Even more, a responsible banker understands the mutually dependent relationship between himself and those he serves, and recognizes the fundamental truth that the success of one will only be assured by the success of the other—a truly symbiotic relationship.

Humble Beginnings

As a local group of experienced businessmen and farmers determined in early 1959, this crucial relationship was weak in Southeastern Idaho. They well understood the bond between the foundational agri-business of this area and a healthy economic climate. So after much discussion among themselves, they took the bold step of forming their own bank, which would respond more appropriately to those fundamental economic truths.

These founders weren't just looking for a source of funding for our area; rather, aware of their dependence upon each other, they wanted a bank that would be an actual partner in each endeavor. A community bank, locally owned and operated, truly invested in the success of their home base.

Local Understanding

Seeking support and investments for their undertaking, these gentlemen didn't just look for the richest, but for the best. They didn't just want people with a high net worth, but those with a high net character.

The names of those early founders are familiar to natives of this area, who recognize their contributions in many local endeavors. Those family names are still among the current members of the board of directors, loyal to the vision of the founders.

In the beginning, these founders joined resources with the Valley Bank in Rexburg, but divided their assets in 1962 to function fully on their own.

Steady Growth

The first building was at 1020 Northgate Mile, and that one office has now grown to 16 branches in Southeast Idaho. Following the I-15 corridor, a branch has opened in Dillon, Montana. Growth has been strong and steady and is a testament to the management of their assets. As current President and CEO Tom Romrell states, "Rather than describing our style as conservative, I prefer responsible."

That approach has definitely paid off. When its doors opened in April of 1959, the bank had about \$8 million in assets. At the time of its fiftieth anniversary celebration, those assets had grown to \$750 million, and last year's annual report showed continued growth to \$977 million.

A Reliable Partner

The bank has been at the side of investors and customers in rough times. Chief operating officer and chief financial officer Ron Johnson remembers, "We were here when the Teton Dam broke and we had agricultural customers then that we worked with to help get them through it. There were people without homes, without automobiles, without tractors and sofas and refrigerators. We worked through that with our customers to try to make it as easy as it could be for them to recover their lifestyles."

The slogan of the Bank of Commerce, "The Bank of a Lifetime," is more than just words to today's officers and board members. "Historically," says Johnson, "the numbers will tell the public that the Bank of Commerce is the most safe and sound financial institution in this state." History has indeed proven that customers who start with the Bank of Commerce remain with the Bank of Commerce.

"Rather than describing our style as conservative, I prefer responsible."

— President and CEO Tom Romrell

A Community Friend

Just as citizens of any community invest in the well-being of our home area, so too does the Bank of Commerce, both as an institution and as individual employees.

Over the last three years, the bank has purchased \$30,000 in food from local grocers to be donated to local food banks.

In partnership with the Idaho Financial Literacy Coalition, the bank has sponsored Southeast Idaho's Piggy Bank Contest, an outreach program for children, investing \$26,000 over a three year period to facilitate this educational program.

Last year the bank donated \$1,000 to CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), a nonprofit network supporting and promoting court appointed volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children.

Bank employees also donate time to community needs. They have prepared and served meals for individuals and residents of City of Refuge Homeless Shelter and Ruth House Women's Shelter.

The bank has been actively involved in supporting local school districts, rehabilitation services, low income housing, and affordable apartment complexes for seniors in its banking area.

Perhaps, rather than just calling the Bank of Commerce a community bank, we should consider calling it a community friend.



The Bank of Commerce has donated \$30,000 in food to the local food banks over the past 3 years.

